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Agent

THE CORRESPONDENT.

Magna est Veritas et Prevalet.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

THE ORIGIN OF CHRISTIANITY; OR,
TRUTH DRAWN FROM FABLES.

CHAP. I.

(Continued from our last.)

All modern writers of sense, even among those who do not attack Christianity, admit that nothing is historically known, from profane works, concerning the Christian religion previous to the middle of the second century. Therefore, the above mentioned date being established as that of the probable origin of this sect, in so far as it is connected with Judaism, with the city of Jerusalem, with Galilea, it becomes less difficult to account for the gradual formation of the Christian religion out of Jewish, Heathen, Pythagorean and Platonic materials.

Another passage in Matthew Chap. xviii v. 17 corroborates the opinion of the late date of the composition of this Gospel the most ancient of the four. "And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the *Church*: but if he neglect to hear the *Church*, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican." This law is taken from the Pentateuch, and *Church* means Congregation, and is substituted to Synagogue or Council of the Elders; but during the life of Jesus and many years after his supposed death, the Christians had no Council that could be called a *Church*, having civil and religious jurisdiction over its members; and is evident that Jesus in the forgoing passage does not allude to the Syn-

agogues, where at that race of vipers, the Pharisees, his mortal enemies. It is also unquestionable, that the primitive Christians, such as Paul, continued to practice the ceremonies of Judaism, and that it was only long after that they established separate communities, the organization of which was very imperfect at first, and possessed little or no civil jurisdiction over the brethren, who were repeatedly reproached by the Elders with resorting to the Roman tribunals for the decision of contentious matters, instead of hearing them decided by their own Churches or communities. Therefore, the term *Church* in the passage alluded to, is an additional and strong proof of the gospel of Matthew having been written long after the taking of Jerusalem by Titus, and when the Christians were regularly organized, and recognized a civil jurisdiction peculiar to their congregations.

To those who have not fully examined the subject, and consulted the earliest writers for and against the Christian Religion, it may seem strange that a difference of so many years should exist between the date assigned by the four Evangelists to the birth and death of Jesus, and those which we here suppose, by referring all that is said of him to his name-sake Jesus, the son of Ananus killed during the siege of Jerusalem. The following observations will, we trust, convince the reader, that we have no positive historical date by means of which we can determine the real epoch of the birth and death

of the Christian Jesus, son of Joseph and Mary.

In the first place, the four Evangelists do not agree as to the precise age at which Jesus died, and the difference is of about three years between them. St. Irenæus who pretends to be better informed on this head, asserts that Jesus died at the age of between 50 and 60 years, and says he had received information from some of the earliest disciples of Jesus. Again, Luke tells us, that Jesus was born in the year when Cyrenius Governor of Syria proceeded to take the census ordered by Augustus, and Matthew tells us that Jesus was born in the last year or years of Herod the Great. But we know from the most positive authorities, that Cyrenius was only appointed Governor of Syria and Judæa about 10 years after the death of Herod. At that time Quinctilius Varus held the Government of Syria, and we know that the census took place 37 years after the battle of Actium, that is, ten years after the death of Herod. Here we have an anachronism of *ten years*, on the most important point of this narrative, and which would of itself be sufficient for our Christian critics to reject any Brahminical or Persian legend as spurious; but which hardly seems to stagger their credulity; or, rather, which their hypocrisy overlooks. Such an anachronism on an event, said to have taken place so few years before the assumed date of the gospels, at once convicts their authors of falsehood, not only on this date, but on many other facts connected with it. If Jesus was born ten years *after* the death of Herod, then his horrid and absurd slaying of the children, the tale of the Magi, the flight into Egypt, are all fabulous; and if we suppose Matthew to be correct, then Luke must have perverted the truth.

Whom are we to believe? Good sense and sound criticism tell us, *disbelieve both.*

In the Jewish life of Jesus, entitled *Sepher Toldos Jeschut*, which is of a very ancient date, probably of the second century, the birth of Jesus is placed under the king of Judæa, Alexander Jannæus, about the time of Sylla's dictatorship. A very singular circumstance which we find related in this book, coincides with the fact mentioned in the very ancient gospel of Nichodemus: in both, Judas is represented, not as a disciple or follower of Jesus, but, on the contrary, as a member of the synagogue, and one of his stern opponents. It is also known to every person acquainted with chronology, that our era commencing from the birth of Christ, was only introduced and adopted a century after it was proposed under the emperor Justinian, by the monk Dionysius, whose opinion, although certainly erroneous, prevailed over eight other ones that were at the time maintained by different writers. Thus it happens that our present era begins four years after the death of Herod; being, therefore, doubly false, and equally opposed to the text of Matthew and to that of Luke. When it was adopted, the ignorance of the clergy was such, that they did not perceive the absurdity of the system of Dionysius; and when this was afterwards fully proved, it was thought better to let matters stand as they were, not to throw greater confusion in the dates of events recorded after this false chronology.

Among the factious leaders punished under the protectorship of Pontius Pilate, many of whom are mentioned by Josephus, who gave themselves for prophets, and led away the credulous Jews, groaning under their

Roman oppressors, very much disposed to break the yoke, and hoping for a new Macchabee as their deliverer, there may have been some obscure man by the name of Jesus, a very common one among the Jews; or this name having become famous from the prediction and extraordinary death of the Jesus son of Ananias, it may have been substituted to that of Judas or any other of the leaders mentioned by Josephus as having excited seditions in the time of Pontius Pilate. What gives some probability to this very natural supposition, is that the forged passages concerning Jesus Christ, are inserted precisely among those paragraphs in which Josephus speaks of those seditious riots, excited under different pretexts by fanatical preachers. At any rate, if a man of the name of Jesus was then executed, he must have been a very obscure individual, and his life and death equally so, since Josephus, who has noticed so many other insignificant enthusiasts, deploring the credulity of his countrymen who allowed themselves to be duped by such imposters, has been silent about the supposed Jesus of Nazareth, son of Mary and of Joseph the carpenter.

(To be Continued.)

For the Correspondent.

FREE PRESS ASSOCIATION.

Permit me, Mr. Editor, through the medium of your independent paper, which has already such a wide circulation, to proclaim to the world that there has been formed in the city of New-York a society, (that has adopted and subscribed a constitution) which bids fair to become a proud monument for future ages. Our religion is the *religion of nature*—the belief in one God; and our golden rule, to do to others as we would wish to be done by. Reason

will soon convince the most incredulous, that this belief is all we need in this world to make us happy, and to prepare ourselves for a more blessed state hereafter.

The sacred banner is now unfurled with "Truth" for its motto; and a rallying point established.—We invite all freemen who yet groan under the yoke of religious despots, to shake off their fetters and join with us in the good work: we have no founder of doubtful parentage to force upon them; we lead them up to the fountain head. We have no holy *Mother*, virgin, or myriads of saints to look up to. Our God is not the bible God, who visits the sins of the father upon his innocent offspring. Our God is a God of mercy, who will not punish mankind for not believing what they cannot understand.

Citizens of this blessed country! fellow freemen! take the earliest opportunity to look seriously into your spiritual affairs. Who is the founder of your religion? How was he begotten? How came he into the world? You have been trained to your creed like a soldier for the army. Before you could read, you were taught to repeat, "I believe in God the father, God the son, and God the holy ghost, and that these three make one."—Before you arrived at the age of manhood, you were hurried on to make a public confession of this your belief, and you were then called a *Christian*. Now mark the policy of your rulers: they continually add new links to the chain by which they hold you; they establish bible, missionary, tract, and even penny societies, (where the poor school boy is robbed of his penny to help to convert a little heathen, whilst he would have preferred to buy an apple with it.) At the head of these societies they generally place

some rich old dotard of high standing, besides as many more rich fools as they can, to compose a board of commissioners. The same game is played with the female part of the creation: from them they derive their firmest support. Who can withstand the application of a bewitching fair angel, who calls upon you for a little contribution in the name of our saviour, to send out a missionary to convert the heathen? holds out heaven as your reward—look at the tempter, think of the reward!!!

Thus far crafty Priests have succeeded. The president's commissioners, and a host of under strappers, clerks, printers, their families, the families of their families, &c. are bound, spell bound forever; they cannot get out. However ridiculous their belief is made to appear, they must defend it to the last; and now behold behind this formidable bulwark, the little round bellied priest, laughing in his heart at all his dupes, and living high at their expense. If you presume to attack the bible like our noble champion, Thomas Paine, out comes an *apology*, as if divine laws needed any support from mortal man. But it has so happened that this very apology has made more proselytes than the "Age of Reason," because to a man of common sense it plainly shows the poor foundation of his belief, which is "faith." Now the real sense of the word faith is to believe what you cannot understand; such as the virgin Mary bringing forth the child Jesus, and remaining a virgin notwithstanding!!!

But let us be merciful; the strength is all on our side; our adversaries are assailable every where; the great work is begun; hence a spark will rise; be converted into a flame and spread over the world.

Hence, I say, for the country which could condemn *Carlisle* to imprisonment for ridiculing a pack of mountebank priests, and their own enslaved tools is not yet ripe for religious liberty. Let us hope to see the Star Spangled Banner proclaim to all mankind liberty in the full sense of the word. Our principles will strike terror into the heart of all religious despots; the mask will fall from the face of the hypocrite, and vice will appear in all its hideous deformity. From all parts of the world friends will range themselves under our banner. Like Cæsar we will say *Veni vide vincit*. "Truth" is our Shield; with it we enter the lists against superstition, mystery and fraud. Our success cannot be doubtful. A DEIST.

For the Correspondent.

THE PUBLIC PRESS.

Mr. Editor: I have just received No. 1 of your Correspondent, and congratulate you on the noble stand you have made towards restoring *mental* liberty to man. And notwithstanding we boast of our civil *independence*, yet, the fact is, we are still *slaves* to priestly bondage. For our masters have effected such a union of *church* and *state* in this country, that there is not a single *free* and *impartial* paper to be found in it. I shall, therefore, not fail in contributing my mite towards filling up the columns of your independent paper. And as Mr. Owen erected the first Light House for Reason and common sense in the west, and you have raised another in the east, it is to be hoped that the time is near at hand, when the Editors of one great city will unite in one great effort to break their priestly chains, and declare their presses *free* for every *candid* and *impartial* discussion—and aid in convincing their priest-ridden read-

ers, of this simple, but solemn truth. *If the Bible is from God,—all the Infidels in Heaven, Earth, and Hell cannot injure it. But if it is not, all the Priests in the world cannot make it so!*—All that we unlearned doubters ask, is, a fair and impartial discussion with the *learned clergy*, before the impartial tribunal of the people.

To what a degraded state of bondage have the American Editors reduced themselves! For they are nearly as much the slaves of their priestly masters, as our Virginia negroes are to us,—for the former are compelled to publish every thing in favor of their masters, but dare not publish a single fact, or a paragraph of truth against them. Nay, if any man of the most exemplary morality and virtue, should find his soul overwhelmed with *conscientious doubts*, which his clergymen are too ignorant to remove, and is finally compelled by his honesty and candor, to publish those doubts, in order to have the benefit of impartial advice from others, not a single Editor can be found, sufficiently honest, to insert such articles in his paper! And yet, it is not because our Editors believe in the fables they support; for I am convinced that the greater part of them laugh in private at the bigotry of the priests, as well as at the people who are so priest-ridden. It is, therefore, nothing but interest (interest as sordid as that of the priests,) which has induced them to abandon their *mental* liberty, and to aid in enslaving that of their countrymen. They are well convinced of the power and dangerous influence which the priests possess; and also of the endless *secret system of persecution* which they adopt against every impartial Editor, by denouncing him in *whispers* or *private* conversations, as no better than an "*Infidel!*" That

such a systematic course of persecution would operate powerfully in reducing the lists of bigoted subscribers to papers, has been fully experienced—and this is the sole cause why the Editors have been compelled to become the hypocrites which we now find them. But, "I would rather be a dog and bay the moon" than such an American!

Nay, so thoroughly degraded had all our Editors become, that they were totally regardless of the *dishonor* which such conduct inflicted on the character of this *Demi-Free Nation*. And notwithstanding, that I repeatedly appealed to some, to retrieve their honor, by shaking off their priestly yokes; yet, it was all in vain. Although I feel grateful to Mr. Owen for introducing the first impartial paper among us,—yet I regret, that that honor was not achieved by an American republican, instead of a subject of George the 4th. But this has been the age of inconsistencies. Still I will hope that a new and more consistent era is now commenced, and will continue to improve in correct principles.

According to our present system, our Senators and great men, may fight duels; or gamble at cards and dice; or bet thousands at the horse races; drink one bottle of wine and another of brandy every day; yet, if they pay one dollar a year to any priest, they are pronounced good christians, and friends to the church!! Nay, the priests will dine at such great Christians' tables, as often as they are invited.

Thus, hypocrisy in the priests, has produced hypocrisy among the people, and the only road now open to fame, honor, or wealth, is that of *hypocrisy*. And as there are always some honest souls, who have some *doubts* relative to religion; so are they compelled by the priests to dis-

guise or conceal them, under the priestly cant of "*forbearance*:" until *candor in religion* is totally banished, and hypocrisy reigns triumphant through the earth.

C. SCHULTZ.

Schultz's Range, Virginia.

Feb. 10, 1827.

MOSES, JESUS AND MAHOMET.

(Continued from our last.)

The unhappy Jews, enchanted to see themselves adopted by the Lord of Lords, at the moment when they had just escaped from the most cruel of all servitudes, applauded Moses, and swore blind obedience to him.—His authority being confirmed, he sought perpetuity; and under the specious pretext of establishing the worship of God, (of whom he called himself the agent on earth,) he made his brother and his son chiefs of the Royal palace; that is, he placed them in the situation which appeared to him best suited to utter their oracles, and which were in the sight and presence of the people. After recurring to that which always has been practiced in new establishments, namely, miracles and prodigies, some were dazzled, and others were confounded.

But cunning as Moses was, it would have cost him infinite trouble to have reduced the people, if he had not been supported by force. Imposture without arms is rarely found to succeed. Among the vast number of victims who submitted blindly to this wily legislator, he met with some sufficiently daring to reproach him to his face with his bad faith, telling him, that under false appearances of justice and equality, he had usurped every thing; that the royal authority had been united in his family, and none had the right to aspire to it; and finally, that instead of being a fa-

ther, he had been a tyrant to the people. On such occasions, Moses, like a profound politician, rid himself of these formidable opponents, and pardoned none who disapproved of his government. With these precautions, and giving the colour of divine vengeance to such punishments, Moses reigned absolutely like a despot; and in order to finish as he had commenced, he concealed himself in a cave which he had dug in the midst of a solitude, to which he from time to time retired, under the pretext of conferring secretly with God. By adopting this course, he secured to himself the respect and submission of his vassals. Besides in choosing this mode of concealment, he calculated that his body would not be found after his death, and that the people would believe that God had taken him in order to make him like himself.—Moses was not ignorant that the memory of the patriarchs who preceded him, was highly venerated, and that their sepulchres were held sacred. But this was not sufficient to satisfy his ambition: it was necessary that they should reverence him as a God, over whom death had no dominion. This was obviously his meaning when he said at the beginning of his reign, "that it was decreed by Jehovah, that he was to be a God over Pharaoh." Following his example, Elias, Romulus, Zamolisis, and many others, have had the foolish vanity of immortalizing their names; have concealed the time of their death, in order that they might be thought immortal.

There has not indeed been one legislator who has not pretended that their laws emanated from the divinity, and endeavored to persuade others that they were something super-human. Numa Pompilius hav-

ing tasted the sweets of solitude, found it difficult to abandon it, although it was to occupy the throne of Romulus ; but being forced to it by public acclamation, he took advantage of the superstition of the Romans, and inculcated that he conversed with the Gods ; which so completely engaged their attention while he was their king, that they determined to obey him blindly, and to observe religiously the laws and instructions which he pretended had been dictated to him by the nymph Egeria.

Similar to this was the vanity of Alexander the Great. Not content with being master of the world, he sought to pass for the son of Jupiter. Perseus also pretended to owe his origin to the same God and the virgin Dande ; and Plato considered himself the son of Appollo and a virgin. There are, besides, other personages that I could mention, who were possessed with the same folly.

OF JESUS.

Jesus, who was not ignorant of the maxims and sciences of the Egyptians, generalized this opinion, because he thought it appropos to his designs. Considering how celebrated it had made Moses, (notwithstanding he only ruled an ignorant people,) Jesus undertook to build on this foundation ; and being followed by some fools, whom he persuaded that the *holy spirit* was his father, and his mother a virgin, these poor people, accustomed to give credit to dreams and phrenzies, adopted his doctrines and believed all that he wished. Such a birth had nothing marvellous in it, if we can likewise credit what the Tartars hold as an article of faith ; that Gengiskan was born of a virgin ; or what the Chinese say of their God,

Foe, who, they pretend, owes his being also to a virgin, impregnated by the rays of the sun.

This prodigy happened at a time when the Jews being tired of their God, as they were of their judges, wished to have, like other nations, one who was visible. As the number of the incredulous was infinite, Jesus soon found listeners in all parts ; but as his extreme poverty was an invincible obstacle to his elevation, the Pharisees (sometimes his admirers, and often fearful of his audacity) praised or slandered him, according to the custom of an inconstant people. The news of his doctrine spread in a short time ; but, destitute of forces, it was impossible that he could succeed in the undertaking. Some sick whom he cured, some pretended dead whom he resuscitated, brought him into notice ; but not possessing either army or money, he could not do otherwise than perish. Had he possessed these resources, he would have obtained his object as did Moses, Mahomet, and all those who have had the ambition to raise themselves above their equals. He might have been more fortunate, but he was not less artful than they ; and some traits in his history prove that the greatest defect in his policy was that of not attending sufficiently to his personal safety. As to the rest, I do not see that his measures were worse taken than those of the former, since it is his law which forms the belief in the people who flatter themselves they are the wisest, best, and only true sect in the world.

(To be Continued.)

For the Correspondent.

FANATICISM.

Religion has had its fanatics of every sort and degree, from the moping pillar-monk down to the

preacher of modern camp-meetings. Critchton, in his observations on mental derangement, notices the fact, that it frequently happens to those who are deranged, that they are only so in relation to some particular subject; and whether that be love or religion, on all other subjects they are perfectly rational.—This very well agrees with my own experience.

About twenty years ago, I was well acquainted with a gentleman in the then village, now city of Troy, possessed of considerable travelled information, who had been a voyage to China, and to some other foreign countries, and who, from being drawn into the methodist society, became soon filled with the wildest vagaries, and the most extravagant fancies imaginable. It was not long before he came to the conclusion that he was divinely inspired. He wrote and published three or four volumes of no inconsiderable bulk in proof; and by these and by preaching, gained at least a couple of dozen of proselytes. Among other strange conceits, he pretended that for two or three years he had committed no sin, either in thought or action; and that he had direct and familiar communication with God, who dictated to him the books which he had written. He actually went so far as to prophesy the precise period when the world should be destroyed; and used up many quires of paper in writing to the various clergymen of eminence in the United States, in exposition of his doctrines, and in challenging their confutation. As an instance of his strange delusion relative to this prophecy, I will state one fact: Being possessed of an excellent farm but a little way out of the village, which he had recently purchased, and which was not in the best condition, he one day took occasion to ask my advice on

the best mode of planting out an orchard. After conversing on this and various other improvements, which the condition of his farm suggested, he cut short the subject by saying, "that as the world would soon be at an end, he would not trouble me nor himself farther in the matter." Yet in all this madness there was method. He was a man of property, and had for many years been a justice of the peace; and, for ought I ever heard, exercised the functions to the public satisfaction. On all other subjects but that of religion, this gentleman conducted himself in a manner perfectly rational. Indeed, he was intoxicated by his religious zeal; but he came too late into the world to make much out of it, either in the way of gaining proselytes while living, or in attaining distinction after death.

So long ago as the apostles' time, the intoxication which the Christian religion produced, may be inferred to have been similar to that produced by the juice of the grape from Peter's own declarations:—"Ye men of Judea, and also ye that dwell in Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my word, for these are not *drunken*, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day."—Acts, chap. 2, v. 14 and 15. Here it appears that spiritual, might naturally enough be taken for *vinous* drunkenness; and that the apostle had nothing to urge in the premises to the contrary, but the *early hour* of the day.*

Whether Peter or the multitude were mistaken on that occasion, I pretend not to determine; but content myself with observing, that history records many instances of religious men, who were never charged with hard drinking, and who yet never did a sober action in any case in which religion was not concerned. At one time, religious enthusiasts

have thought it meritorious to run into the very embrace of death to insure applause, and an exalted situation in heaven. At another, by performing vows of abstinence, toil, and danger, they have attempted to secure the same object; and it must be confessed, if the applause of the world could be taken as a criterion of God's approbation and reward in a future state, they had ample assurance.

At one time, the gift of prophecy was considered the most unequivocal indication of religious distinction.—And men ardently wishing to be highly noticed, have run into the infatuation, that they were urged on by the eternal spirit of the great God, to deliver his decrees to the children of men. This delusion, originating in a mind imbued with religious ideas, and submitted to the operations of a fervid imagination, will be found, generally, to account for that loftiness, or, more properly speaking, that wildness of manner, that fire of fluency, and that boldness of invective, to be seen in this species of writing.

Sometimes religious fanatics have evinced their sincerity, and fixed determination to devote all their powers and faculties to God, by immoderate gesticulations, and the most violent exercises of worship. Such were the shakers, more particularly of the first stamp. Such, also were the methodist leaders thirty years ago. I heard of one of these who was proud to relate of himself, that the spirit had so complete possession of him at one time, that in prayer he had broken a chair to pieces, and also broken a hole through the floor, by dint of stamping with his feet; and that he was unconscious of doing either at the time.

Some devotees have essayed to secure heaven, if not fame, by muti-

lating their bodies—cutting and clearing away all inlet and foul desire and sinful lust. These, it must be confessed, in setting their faces heavenward, were in little danger of losing their way, or of being turned aside by the allurements of another Eve. If the primitive Christians had all been *like these*, another kind of crusade might have happened from that which disgraced Europe; but it would have been confined to the *female world*—The heavenly city in that case, would have been taken, and, we have no doubt, kept to this day by the victor band, unless, indeed, the Saracens had been the most *ungallant* men in the world. **LOOKER ON.**

Athens, Feb. 23d, 1827.

* It cannot appear surprising that the Jews should have attributed the frenzied language and manner of the first preachers of Christianity to *intoxication*, when they found it established, by their own books, that the priests and prophets were addicted to the same vice. The *priests* and the *prophets* have erred through *strong drink*; they are *swallowed up with wine*; they are out of the way through *strong drink*; they err in *vision*; they *stumble* in judgment."—(Isa. 28, 7.) The celebrated Henry Dodwell (*De Jure Laicorum*, p. 269) asserts, that the prophets prepared themselves to prophecy 'by drinking wine.'

EDIT. OF CORRESPONDENT.

The Correspondent.

Magna est Veritas et Prevalebit.

NEW-YORK, MARCH 3, 1827.

EUROPEAN AFFAIRS.

It appears by the London papers, received to the 16th ult. that the *pious* Ferdinand was procrastinating an answer to the remonstrance of the British government respecting the affairs of Portugal. This is attributed to the influence of the *apostolics*, who possessed a complete ascendancy over the bigotted monarch; but it was not doubted that he would be induced from fear, to yield to the wishes of the cabinet of St. James,

The Duke of York, *bishop of Osnaburg, &c. &c.* was dead, and the panders of royalty and partizans of the "established religion" were loud in their praises of his "virtues and princely qualities." One of these sycophants had even gone so far as to assert, in an official communication to the Mayor of Bristol, "that no prince ever lived more beloved, or died more justly lamented."—How far these encomiums were well founded, our readers will be able to judge after perusing the following extracts from two English papers :

"Besides the Duke of York's attachment to the excesses of the table: to gambling on the turf and elsewhere, and to another class of immoral indulgencies, which, without being named, may be sufficiently comprehended; his royal highness was weakly—we are bound to add culpably, as well as most unhappily, insensible to the real use of money. Notwithstanding the vast income afforded him by the liberality of the British nation, he contracted enormous debts, without the means, or even the thought, as it would appear, of discharging them; and involved in distress many hundreds of families, to whom he is now cut off forever, and might at any time have been equally precluded from offering the smallest reparation. This is, unhappily, regarded as one among the most venial offences of the aristocracy of England. It is positive injustice: it may not be deliberate, but it is intrinsic robbery."—*Times*.

"In his affair with Mrs. Clarke, and in his permitting an application to be made to Parliament after the death of his mother, for an allowance of ten thousand pounds a year for performing the common filial duty of visiting his aged parent, whose infirmities procured him the unaffected sympathy of all his subjects, detract-

ed from the popularity which his gentlemanly deportment and affability of manners had otherwise obtained him. But these circumstances would soon have been buried in oblivion, and he would have carried with him out of the world the unabated attachment of the people, who had begun to look upon him as their future sovereign, but for the intemperate, ill-timed, and uncalled for declaration of his sentiments on the subject of Catholic emancipation. His speech on that subject lost him the respect and esteem of seven millions of people; a sacrifice that could not be compensated by the fulsome adulation of the zealots in whose hands he was, and to gratify whom it was made,"

Bristol Mercury.

We have ample and pleasing confirmation of the intelligence, recently communicated, that the priesthood in France had rendered themselves obnoxious, by their intolerance, to almost the whole population of that country. A work had appeared in Paris entitled, "The situation of the clergy, of the magistracy, and of the ministry at the opening of the session of 1827, by M. Cottin, Counsellor and Chevalier of Honor," which had occasioned great excitement among the *privileged orders*. The following extract, from the *Courier Français*, explains the cause of this alarm:

"There exists at the present time in France an insurmountable aversion to the rule of the clergy. This aversion is not founded on the integrity of the French character, and its detestation of hypocrisy, but on a clearer perception of the true spirit of the Evangelist. When Jesus has said in the most positive terms: "My kingdom is not of this world," it is not permitted to see a christian in a priest who would make of the world *his* kingdom, and who turns to the profit of his ambition the just respect

which is borne towards him as minister of Jesus Christ. This aversion is founded on the passionate love of the French for the independence of their country; and to the rights which are recognized by the charter. The charter is, in fact, more than any other form of government, incompatible with the political authority of the clergy, since it leaves them no means direct or indirect to possess themselves of the general administration of affairs. If the whole power resides in one person, it is easy for the clergy to possess themselves of his confidence; when it is placed in an assembly, their object can not be always obtained and never without intrigue. For this reason (the editor observes) the clergy are hostile to the constitution, and from their attempts to overturn it arise the divisions and confusion now existing in France."

At Lyons, and other places, the priests embraced every opportunity of insulting the people. During one of their ridiculous processions at the former place in honor of a saint called Dizier, the shouts of "*Vive Dieu! Vive Jesus! Vive la Mission! A bas les incredules, les Impies,*" &c. were vociferated by the monks, for the purpose of creating an excitement against the liberals; but the attempt proved unsuccessful, and was the following day censured in the public journals. "To men endowed with common sense (observes the *Pre-curseur de Lyon*,) the cries of *Vive Dieu, Vive Jesus*, will appear absurd, if not blasphemous. How can any one wish life to the supreme Being, the author and principle of life? But these cries assume a more serious character from those by which they were accompanied. They become a provocation dangerous to the public peace. *Vive Dieu* and *A bas les Incredibles*, signify: Accursed be those

who do not believe what I believe. *Vive Jesus! A bas les impies!* may be interpreted: Death to all those that have not the same piety as myself."

At Rome, where the will of the clergy is paramount to all law, the intolerant spirit was maintained in full vigor. In an official document, dated the 2d of January last, we find an extraordinary instance of petty vindictive persecution directed against the unfortunate Israelites. The most Rev. Father Inquisitor of the Holy Office of Ancona, Senigallia, etc. has "in obedience to the commands of his Holiness Leo III" issued a circular, ordering all Jews to dismiss their *Christian* servants, females as well as males, not even excepting such of the former as might be employed as nurses. This papal bull also prohibits the introducing into the houses of Jews any Christian for the purpose of lighting fires and candles on Friday evening, or Saturdays, or on any Hebrew festival whatever. The violators of this Inquisitorial order are liable to severe penalties to be inflicted at "the pleasure of the supreme Holy Congregation."

While the clergy of France and of Rome were thus endeavoring to "compel" others "to come in," and to submit to their arrogant domination, it appears that they had abandoned themselves to the commission of the most enormous crimes. A missionary, named Gautier, had been sentenced to three years imprisonment for robbery. He had been admitted as a novice by the monks of La Trappe; but having left that convent and attached himself to the seminary of Foreign missions at Paris, in an evil hour the ex-brother fixed his eye on the key-basket of the Superior, and, yielding no doubt to *Satanic* influence, took one of the keys, unlocked the Secretary, and

stole from the good Abbe 14954, francs. At Fribourg, another Apostolical missionary, named Molitor de Vigny, had been apprehended for a robbery committed at the house of a country Rector, and for a second robbery in the church of the Hospice of the Simplon; and, in the same city, a Parisian ecclesiastic, who pretended to be a relative of the cardinal de Rohan, had been arrested for swindling. Does not these glaring outrages; these gross violations of every principle held sacred in society, justify the accusation, that the priesthood are the most flagitious of men; that with them morality is unworthy of consideration; and that as long as they can obtain money to support themselves in idleness and luxury, they are regardless of what others may think or do?—There is, in fact, no competition among the clergy as to who shall perform the utmost good, but who shall have the power of plundering and deceiving mankind. If the priests in the United States are more circumspect than the priests of Europe, it is only because they are restrained by the laws, and by public opinion. Had the framers of our constitution introduced an article into that document, recognizing, in the most distant manner, the creed of any religious sect, we should have been as much the prey of the rapacity of churchmen as the people of any nation on earth.

Wherever priestianity has the ascendancy, we are sure to find the most lamentable instances of the direful effects of fanaticism. The following recent example appeared in the London Morning Herald:—

“A melancholy instance of religious fanaticism occurred a few days ago at Brighton. A lady, by the name of B——, who is residing at a boarding-house, left her home in the middle of the day, and was ab-

sent until eight o'clock, when she was discovered on the Race-hill in the middle of the rain, which poured in torrents. It appears that she had prevailed on a man, whom she met, to accompany her to the Downs, where she made him kneel by her side, and both continued praying, and occupied we suppose, in other religious exercises, till she was found as above described. How the man was induced, unless by the hope of pecuniary reward, to remain exposed to the drenching showers for so long a period, remains undiscovered. She took it into her bewildered imagination that she was Jesus Christ, and did him homage as such. When, at length, she was found by some people who were passing that way, and who were attracted to the spot by the singularity of her situation, her draggled clothes, and drenched person, rendered her a melancholy object. She was humanely taken to her residence, and every care was bestowed that her distressing situation seemed to require. Miss B—— is a maiden lady, and has moved in a very respectable sphere, visiting many of the principal families at Brighton.”

The *Globe*, an evening paper, also published in London, states that an Irishman, named Prior, conceiving himself possessed with a demon, had lately obtained a passport from the French consul in London, for the purpose of proceeding to the monastery of La Trappe, in order to get the monks to dispossess him. On setting out, he was clothed in a sackcloth shirt, girt round the waist, without hat or shoes, or indeed any other article of apparel besides his sackcloth shirt, except a pair of light trousers. On reaching Calais, he was arrested by the police, and detained in prison till an opportunity offered of sending him back to Eng.

land. When he was arrested, he was quite naked, with the exception of his shirt, but a Boulonnais humanely gave him a pair of trowsers. The man appeared to be sane enough on all points, except of the possession of the demon, and reasoned well on what he called the injustice of sending him away from France when provided with a passport, merely because he was clothed in sackcloth, and went barefooted. On his arrival at Dover, he was provided with twenty-five francs in silver, which were given to him by the police, or by some of the religious devotees in Boulogne, with whom he appeared to be a great favorite. Indeed, the good old ladies of Boulogne were quite indignant with the police for sending away this holy pilgrim.

The *Free Press Association* will meet to-morrow, (Sunday) at 4 o'clock, afternoon, in the Academy, corner of Pearl-street and Broadway. A punctual attendance is desirable, and such of the members as may have books intended for donations, are requested to bring them to the meeting.

MISCELLANEOUS.

The Monk and the Devil.—The abbey of St. Ouen was originally dedicated to the twelve apostles, but St. Ouen by degrees usurped their worship and offerings, as Becket did in his shrine at Canterbury those of God and the virgin. The different dukes of Normandy were its munificent patrons, and whenever they came to Rouen, bestowed upon it liberal marks of their favor and piety. Among others, Richard Sans peur, the son of Guillaume Longue-pee, who succeeded his father about

nine hundred and thirty, has been recorded in the chronicles as an illustrious benefactor : and so great a favorite was he with the saint and his friends, that he is reported to have been applied to by them on a singular occasion. It happened that a monk of the abbey had been beset by the tempter, and communicated his temptations to the wife of a *bourgeois* of the city. The lady was not inexorable, and the holy father was on his way one evening to confer with his confidante a little farther concerning the said temptations, when, in crossing a little wooden bridge, he happened to fall into the river beneath, and was drowned. On which, the devil in great glee, made his appearance, and claimed as of fee, the body and soul of the unfortunate monk. But an angel, determined on resisting this claim, presented himself forthwith before Satan, denying that he had any right to so holy a person's remains. The question was a nice one, and accordingly they carried it before duke Richard, who was requested to hold a Bed of Justice on it, he being at that time lying fast asleep in his apartment : on what law he decided the case is not known ; but it appears to have been a *standing* one, for he gave judgment that the dead monk should be put on his feet again, and suffered to act as he chose ; and if he took advantage of his reprieve, to pursue the plan of wickedness he had meditated, according to the devil's evidence, then that personage was entitled to him—but on the contrary, if he returned to his cell, that then, Satan must be nonsuited. This was therefore done, and the monk no sooner found himself on *terra firma*, and himself again, than he made the best of his way back to the abbey, and the devil was thus cast in damages and costs.

Witches.—Magic was formerly studied by most persons. It was used to render persons unfit for amorous pleasures; was employed in ligatures to cure diseases; and the Visigoths used to steal the *sarcophagi* of the dead for this purpose. But the application of magic was endless. There were two kinds which obtained in England: one, that of scientific sorcery, derived from the Arabians of Spain, and consisting of judicial astrology, divination by horoscopes, cups, glasses, mirrors, swords, &c.; and the other, witchcraft, of northern origin, implying direct communication with fiends. Augury formed part of the science of the Anglo-Saxon witches; and it is expressly denominated the *old augury*. The sabbath of witches was supposed to be a nocturnal assembly on a Saturday, in which the devil was said to appear in the shape of a goat, about whom they made several dances, and performed magical ceremonies. In order to prepare themselves for their meeting, they took several soporific drugs; after which they were fancied to fly up the chimney, and to be spirited or carried through the air, riding on a switch to their sabbath assemblies. The property of conveyance was communicated to broomsticks by rubbing them with a particular ointment. A cat, an animal highly revered by the Egyptians and Romans, was a *sine qua non*; and Knighton mentions persons keeping devils in the form of cats. They had particular instruments which they used in their arts, in the cure of headache, &c. The Anglo-Saxon witches practiced the ancient augury. They even retained the old art of divination by cutting up victims. We find that, if a lover could not obtain his fair object, he caused her to be bewitched; that witches were brought out to enchant the engines of besiegers;

that favour was supposed to be gained by witchcraft; that the practice was firmly believed to be the case of extraordinary actions, and made the subject of accusation from malice. In fact, the clergy made it the means of intimidating and governing the laity, in the manner of the inquisition, by charging enemies with it, and so excommunicating them, and endangering their lives and property. We see horse-shoes, bowls, hawks, &c. nailed on doors. This was one Roman method of preventing witchcraft. Brand mentions various other modes. The trial by immersion was an abuse of the cold-water ordeal. The right hand was tied to the left foot, and the left hand to the right foot. If they swam they were strongly suspected, and exposed to the greater trial. It would be utterly impossible, in a limited work like this, to give the contents of the two large quartos forming the "Popular Antiquities." The rule observed has been to explain superstitions still existing, or which throw strong light upon ancient manners. I shall therefore end this article by observing, that *boh* the word now used to frighten children, was the name of BOH, a great general, son of Odin, whose appellation struck immediate panic in his enemies.

St. Januarius.—An Italian priest, while pronouncing a panegyric on this saint, had brought him to heaven when he began to consider what place he should assign to him there. 'Where shall we put him,' he said; 'not on the right hand of Almighty God, for *there* is our Saviour Jesus Christ; not on the left hand, for *there* is the Blessed Virgin; not on the right hand of our Saviour, for *there* is St. Peter.' 'Padre,' exclaimed a *lazzeroni*, rising, 'look, father, you may put him *here*,' pointing to his seat, 'for I am going away.'

The Tree of Life.—In the Romance of Lancelot du Lake there is a curious account of the Tree of Life, which is more likely to be the traditionary belief of that age, than the invention of the mystical romancer who added these wild and incongruous fictions to the story.—“When Adam and Eve were expelled from Paradise, Eve still carried in her hand, unconsciously, the fatal branch which she had plucked from the forbidden tree; and casting her eyes upon it, and calling to mind all the evil of which it had been the occasion, she resolved that she would keep it forever, as a memorial of her great misadventure. But then she recollected that she had neither coffer nor hutch to keep it in, for in those times it was not yet the custom to have such things, so she planted it upright in the earth, and by the will of the Lord it struck root, and became a great tree. Now the trunk and the branches and the leaves of this tree, were all as white as a peeled nut, that it might be a type of virginity, and by reason that she who planted it was yet a virgin. One day while they were lamenting their fall under this tree, a voice came forth from it and comforted them, so that thenceforth they took great joy in beholding it, and called it the Tree of Life, and planted many slips from it, all of which grew, and were white like their parent stock. But when, by the command of the Lord, Adam knew Eve his wife and she conceived of Abel under that tree, then the whole tree became green, and then it began to flower and produce fruit, which it had not done till then; and all the young trees which proceeded from it after that time, partook of the same nature; but those which had grown before continued white, after its former nature. And when Abel and his brother Cain grew up, and

Cain killed Abel under that tree, upon the very place where he was begotten, then the tree became of the color of blood, and from that day forth it never put forth fruit or flower, neither could any young tree be raised from it, but it continued just as it was, neither bettering nor worsening. Nevertheless, the trees which sprang from it, retained each its own nature, according to the nature of the stock at the time they were set off. And they continued thus till the time of the flood, and the waters of the flood, which destroyed all other things, did nothing harm these trees, and thus they continued till the age of Solomon.”

Excommunication.—This existed as a religious punishment among the classical ancients and the Druids. The greater excommunication separated persons from the society of believers, and participation of the sacrament. Such excommunicants were not to enter the church, or stand near it in service-time. In the lesser, the parties were not to communicate till absolved. It was a singular privilege of kings and priests, that if they took the sacrament with excommunicants, the latter were immediately restored to the communion. The ceremony consisted in certain anathemas, the book at the end suddenly closed, candles thrown violently on the ground, and the bells rung with a hideous noise.

Religious Fairs.—The uses to which religious tenets are applied during fairs in catholic countries, are exemplified in the following anecdote: “At Lyons we purchased a canticle in honor of St. Suare, who reproved the Deity for a mistake concerning a late murder there; and at another city we were presented with a sermon, literally in praise of drunkenness, in which every text is quoted from the gospel, to pro-

mote the sale of grapes during the wine-harvest; and our blessed Saviour is absolutely represented as the real friend of publicans and sinners."—*Braddock's Memoirs*.

Public Schools.—The public are beginning to understand the wretched system prevailing in our public schools, under which all the most useful parts of education are sacrificed to the tedious acquirement of a parrot-like ability to talk Greek and Latin. The following anecdote, the truth of which we vouch for, bears upon this subject: A gentleman, returning home after a long absence from England, called lately upon a young kinsman in Westminster school, who had been in that foundation for a considerable period.—Asking a few questions at random, with a view to ascertain the youth's general knowledge, he said among other things—"Where is the Burmese empire?" The scholar answered—"I don't know exactly; but it is somewhere in Africa!"—*London Examiner*.

Idolatry.—At the last setting of the Society of Courland, at Mittau, the Pastor Waltson read a memoir, entitled, "Essay on the Mythology of the Lithuanians at the commencement of the 15th Century, under the reign of Witold, the father of Jagellou."—Would any one suppose that, at a period so near us as the beginning of the 15th century, the inhabitants of Lithuania adored serpents and fire, which they took care to keep continually burning in their temples; and, still more strange to say, a hammer of prodigious size, to which they attributed the deliverance of the sun from its periodical prison! They also revered several forests, as being the residence of their divinities!!

Catholicism.—A very striking specimen of the pliancy of Catholicism

to the interests of despotism, appears conspicuous in the fulsome eulogy, which that champion of popery, Mr. Daniel O'Connell, made of the excellent family which presides over that fortunate country, France, in his opening speech at the fourth Catholic meeting, held in Dublin, the 17th January, 1826. The next subject of panegyric for that gentleman's oratory may be expected to be the pious Ferdinand VII., and perhaps the charitable Redschid Pacha, or the Chevalier *sans peur et sans reproche* Ibrahim Pacha. They all serve the same sacred cause, legitimacy, and are entitled to the same oratorical ovations. The one has restored the Inquisition in Spain; the others are endeavoring to re-establish in Greece the liberal and humane institutions of the Seraglia.

* * * Arrangements have now been made by which the CORRESPONDENT will appear regularly every Saturday. Those who have signified their intention to patronize this work, are respectfully reminded of the terms of subscription. They cannot but be aware, that considerable outlays are requisite to effect its establishment, and that unless a desire to see this done is accompanied by pecuniary aid, they may, possibly, be disappointed in their wishes. From those city subscribers who may not feel it convenient to pay for a whole year in advance, the half of that sum will be accepted.

The CORRESPONDENT will be published in future at 48 Pine-street, opposite Niblo's Coffee House; and subscriptions continue to be received at 114 Fulton-street; at the book store corner of Vesey-street and Broadway; at the book store corner of Reed and Greenwich-streets; and at the Bank Lodge, 45 William-street, near Wall-street.